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A MUSICAL EXPERIMENT.

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The following report is submitted as a postscript, as it were, to the articles on "Musical Expressiveness," found in Vols. IV and V of this JOURNAL. The experiment was modeled after the one there given, with a few unimportant variations. Six selections of music were interpreted. After each of these an interval was allowed for the listeners to write down the impressions received from the music. No questions were asked on the selections, nor were the titles or composers of the selections given. Twenty-two persons were present at the recital. Answers from all were not received for each selection. Only one of the twenty-two, namely (21), was a professional musician. The remaining twenty-one persons had either no musical training whatever, or but comparatively little. With one or two exceptions all were fond of music.

The programme was intentionally made short, the whole experiment lasting not more than an hour and a half. The selections were lettered A, B, C, D, E and F. The answers to each are numbered to twenty-two. The first seven are returned by gentlemen, the remaining fifteen by ladies. The piano-forte was the only instrument used; there were three performers. The experiment was under the direction of Prof. E. E. Slosson (University of Wyoming) and Misses A. H. Talbot and J. E. Downey. The names of the selections and answers returned follow:

A. *Chopin. Funeral March (Sonata, Op. 35)*. 1. First sensation, that it was one of Mrs. Caudle's curtain lectures, interspersed with soliloquies over her own hard lot. Later concluded it represented a tired father walking the floor at midnight with a cross, crying baby, and alternately singing Watts' "Cradle Hymn" and scolding the baby. 2. Funeral of a soldier. 3. I was affected as I would have been had I read a strong, spirited poem. In fact, the first distinct impression was of some sweet poem of Scott; not military, but peaceful. 4. Grief, mourning, swelling to a climax. Reaction. Hope, faith, doubt alternate. 5. A country scene. Old orchard, tremendous trees, blossom-fragrant air. A breeze stirs the boughs. Rain begins to fall, first in large drops, then in rhythmic sheets, driven by gusts of wind. Thunder is followed by increased down-pour. The sun breaks through the clouds. Sun-shower; the reverberations of the summer-shower roll across the distant hills. 6. Funeral procession of Abraham Lincoln. 7. Sadness. An unsuccessful but constantly renewed attempt to throw off the burden of sorrow. 8. A life of possibly more than usual melancholy with ray of hope and happiness brought in unwelcomely; or the hope of something unexpected coming without recognition. A slight recognition of the ideal without overcoming the natural or acquired

melancholy. 9. Either a storm at sea, or a battle. 10. My thoughts were of the composer. At the beginning it suggested a storm at sea, then, at times, music on the water, or in the distance. The interpretation does not interest me so much as the harmony of tones. 11. A death and the heavy sorrowing of friends, a sorrow too deep for tears, which soon finds relief in tears. This changes to a feeling of loneliness and resignation which is beautiful. It is the covering of a sorrowful heart with a smile. The repetition of the first part is the rekindling of the sorrow which finally brings the person to an extremely morbid state. 12. Saw a moon-lighted garden surrounding an ancient castle. A band of monks was marching to their church in the distance, where the organ was softly playing. A mother was pleading with her son not to join them. After much pleading on her part and grumbling answers on his, he still insists on his own way. 13. My impression was of passing a church and of hearing the organ; then of passing into the woods, and hearing a storm; then of walking by the side of a stream which at first seemed but a brook, but which grew in size, yet ever sang a sweet song, sad at times, the stream flowing on and on, and emptying into a river just where the trees met. 14. A calm, clear, sunny afternoon with pleasing landscape. A traveler is lying on the greensward and reveling in the quiet scene. But soon clouds roll up, and thunder, dark, growling at first, then angry. There comes a shower, after which reappears the peaceful, sunny scene. Night falls. A few angry peals of thunder, a few flashes of lightning come, and rain threatens, but does not fall. 15. The first part of the selection brought to my mind a funeral train. I believe I could quite see the picture. The line of march must have been miles in length. Then comes a storm, and the rest is indistinct. 16. This impressed me as a descriptive piece. It described a feeling of resignation over a death, and the sorrow went as an undertone through the entire piece, toning down any other violent feelings. It presented a distinct feeling that might easily have been put into a picture. 17. A wail of a lost spirit. 18. Sadness. Death. It called to my mind memories of a dear friend who died years ago. 19. A double picture. Something deep and solemn and ominous, like the distant roar of a rising sea. Then a group of women talking, sometimes singing, but always listening. Occasionally the sea drowned the sound of their voices, then is quiet again. In the end there is a flood of lightning and a louder roar, then silence. 20. Known. Chopin's Funeral March. To me it represents the funeral of a soldier. First and third the march to and from a cathedral. The trio between represents the singing in cathedral and the organ-strings which accompany the burial service. 21—. 22. Deep, hopeless sorrow for someone lost. A prayer for help. The answer to the prayer. Hope and courage given.

B. *S. F. Powell, Nocturne, Hope (Op. 4, No. 1)*. 1. Expression of the exuberant. Impulsive spirit of children at play. 2. No impression, unless it was the wind rustling through leaves. 3. I seem to have heard the piece at sometime previous. My mind occupied in finding where and by whom. Cannot recall, but impression evidently pleasurable. 4. This situation seems retrospective. A narrative of younger experience. 5. No defined impression save of singing maid with hope in her thought, shadow of possible ill and certainty of present happiness. 6. No impression. Called up no image. 7. Quiet enjoyment. Under a tree in the woods with no duty waiting to be done. 8. Suppressed joy. A dance of the fairies or of a sunbeam. 9. Sentiment, youth,

hope, Spring, happiness. 10. First part meditation, then pleading. 11. A perfectly happy life with a vein of sadness here and there, which comes of a thoughtful disposition. There is also a hopeful feeling mingled with the sadness. 12. Known. A happy, hopeful song. 13. My impression was of water flowing over pebbles, singing a gay little song, then of flowing over a wheel and singing a promise of future calmness and happiness. 14. Just a happy heart, full of sunshine; but afterwards a doubt, a shadow obscures the sky a little. 15. A restful sensation, but no impression. 16. It reminds me of a person whom I know whose chief characteristic is a happy shallowness. No serious view of life. The picture of the person came surrounded by various unfavorable circumstances. Do not care for this style of music. Not impressed by it. 17. No impression. 18. Organ voluntary in a large cathedral. (Selection not recalled, but probably a memory association.) 19. Doubt, uncertainty, indecision. A character, a girl, with varying moods. Moonlight fitting over tree-tops, or sunlight playing upon a shaded spot. 20. Known. Hope. First, blue sky with a few white, fleecy clouds on horizon; green trees. Secondly, nest of young birds. Thirdly, silence, save for sound of a distant babbling brook.

C. S. F. Powell, *Nocturne, Solitude* (Op. 3, No. 2). 1. Conveyed the idea of a political or theological argument or discussion. 2. No impression. 3. It seemed to me that I saw a man (or woman) in a crowded portion of a metropolis. Then I saw a stream flowing full and clear through a cool grove of magnificent trees. The impression of unrest and great longing seemed to be conveyed. 4. This may be an invocation, an address, though I cannot say positively that it leaves any definable impression upon me. 5. Tea-party. Chinese lanterns emerging from the trees. Lovely scene. 6. No impression. 7. No expression of emotion for me. 8—. 9. Memory reminded me of piano practice. 10. Thought all the time of the harmony of tone. No particular impression except of the running from one key to another. 11. An old man looking back on his life with a feeling of pride and of sorrow. Although he knows that he soon must die, yet he clings to life, "as a drowning man will clutch a straw." 12. Simply a song with a note of anxiety. 13. Impressions not definite. 14. No impression. 15. Water running over stones. 16. This gave me an uncomfortable confused feeling. I saw a picture of a storm on water with the patches of blue sky through the clouds. I felt annoyed at the confusion which it seemed to express. The picture was secondary. 17. No impression. 18. No impression. 19. A reverie of mingled regret and resignation. Something given up or something gained—which is the dearer? 20. Known. Solitude. Same background as in former selection. Blue sky and green trees, but a woman enters. A mother's anxiety for her child.

D. *Händel's Aria, opening bars, "He was despised and rejected of men," from the Messiah*. 1. Don't recognize it. Should think it was calculated to inspire religious and devotional feeling. 2. Devotional music. 3. No distinct impressions other than those of memory. I thought of churches. 4. This seems an invocation, importing praise, or perhaps repentance. 5. Hymn, expressing confidence in a state of future blessedness. Collection plate is being passed around. 6. No impression. 7. Known. Devotional. All sorrow, unrest, and trouble merged into peace. Chaos becomes Nirvana. 8. Don't recognize it. A cathedral; contrite heart bowed in prayer. 9. Devotional music. Reverential, inviting contrition. 10. Very familiar; can't recall name. Sacred song.

Suggests prayer. 11. A prayer. Church music. 12. Gave me the impression of church music. First few chords and the last most impressive. 13. Thought of my childhood, the love and tenderness of my mother. First part of strain gave the impression. 14. A sinful soul repentant and begging for mercy, then joyful because salvation seems near. 15. Presbyterian church choir. 16. This music heard at some Episcopal service, I think as an offertory solo. It suggested the taking of the collection. 17. Life no good. Hope. Despair. 18. Methodist church choir. 19. Known. A gust, overwhelming. Complaint of sorrow. 20. Händel's Aria—"He was despised and rejected of men." Seems to express self-renunciation and spiritual consolation, alternating with deep dejection and physical languor. Ends in a strain of faith. 21. A selection by Händel, which inspires religious feeling; a bright, encouraging strain is heard through the piece.

E. Chopin, *Nocturne* (Op. 15). 1. Rather exhilarating and inspiring. Inclines one to want to dance. 2. A merry party attending a dance. 3. My impression was that the composer was going through some miserable affair of life. The lighter shades were hopeful. 4. An impression of life and action, rising and falling. Perhaps passion. 5. Sick-room. Patient very low. Doctor calls. Friends weep. Hope gone. Sick man makes great effort. Rises in bed, saying, "I ain't dead yet." Great joy. 6. No impression. 7. Quiet enjoyment. A merry mood, but kept within the limits of rational and innocent joy. 8. Conglomeration (Oolite). 9. Sentiment patriotic. Emotions, haste, energy, enthusiasm, unity. Memory, Fourth of July. 10. Thought it by Chopin. Irrepressible child, first here, then there, and nowhere in particular. Very suggestive of Chopin. 11. Someone seemed trying to be bright and cheerful, while all the time a strain of sadness was running through the life. 13. The impression produced was that of a party of friends who had gathered together to bid farewell to one of their number. They endeavor to be gay and happy, but there is a consciousness of sadness even in the midst of their pleasure. 14. Circus. Three rings. Interval. Then child rope-walker. Everyone breathless until he is through. 15. It brought to my mind the theatre where I had heard it or something similar. 16. I think the music probably described water in some form. My thought rather of the execution. 17. "I call earth not gray, but rosy." Joy. 18. Wind blowing through the trees. 19. A woman sitting in a moonlit garden. She is quiet and calm, but cannot quite lend her mind to the enjoyment of the beautiful night. Something troubles her and once wholly shuts out her surroundings, then by an unusual effort she forgets everything but the peace and serenity of the night and half dreams and dozes. 20. Love song. Sequence of emotions, tenderness, passion, solicitude, rivalry, ending with anxious tenderness and uncertainty by no means hopeless. 21. A nocturne by Chopin, which begins with a religious sentiment and becomes more intensified. Afterwards a feeling of repose or giving up of hope, ending with a peaceful thought to be resigned to fate.

F. Schubert-Liszt *Serenade*. 1. Sounds very natural. Like a lot of ladies all talking at once. Not one listening to what another is saying. 2. No impression. 3. (a) Feeling of happiness, (b) children at play, (c) home scenes, (d) earnestness, (e) desire, (f) yearning. The selection gave me a pleasant and joyous feeling. 4. Merely an impulse to make a noise. 5. Trout fishing. Big fish on hook. Takes both hands to hold him. Large sand fly lights on fisher's nose. Reel sings. He pulls him toward shore. Can see fins of fish in water. Steps on round stone. Falls down, loses fish.

Breaks pole. All the fish in basket get away. 6. No impression. 7. Fun and frolic. 8. Dancing and joy. 9. Sentiment, gaiety. Waltz at first. 10. Something light and dainty. Suggested pleasure and happiness. Nothing sad or religious. 11. An ideal Spring morning, when the birds are chirpy and building their nests, the flowers are blossoming, the air is fresh and fragrant. 12. Impression was vague. Birds twittering in the trees. 13. My impression was of an opera house, brightly lighted, the orchestra playing, people entering and exchanging courtesies. 14. Everybody happy. Clear skies. Tally-ho starting off. 15. No impression. 16. Simply enjoyed it. Think it a French selection. 17. Dancing, good company. 18. Happiness. A gay party of young people enjoying a frolic. 19. Known. Distinct associations. 20. Moonlight in Spain. Some light and passing emotion expressed. 21. "Hark, hark, the lark."—Shakespeare. By Schubert-Liszt. I know this composition, which expresses the singing of birds to me. It is bright and happy. 22. Twittering of birds.

We shall next proceed to analyze the music and the impressions produced:—

A. *Chopin's Funeral March*. Twenty-one answers were received. The music is analyzed as dull grief and despair giving way to consolation in the trio, with a final return to the original mood. Of the twenty-one papers received, eight record an impression of death or its accompaniments, as follows: (2) funeral of a soldier; (6) funeral procession of Abraham Lincoln; (11) a death and the heavy sorrowing of friends; (15) first part of selection brought to mind a funeral train; (16) death, memories of a dead friend; (20) funeral of a soldier; (22) deep, hopeless sorrow for some one lost.

The analysis of the music, however, gives an emotional sequence, deep grief, hope, return to grief. This sequence is distinctly found in (11) a sorrow for death, too deep for tears, tears come and resignation, return to the sorrow with morbidness; also in (4) grief, mourning, swelling to a climax, reaction; hope, faith, doubt alternate. The elements of sorrow and hope are recognized in (16) death and resignation; (22) deep sorrow for one dead, prayer for help, answer to the prayer, hope and courage given; (7) sadness, an unsuccessful but constantly renewed attempt to throw off the burden of sorrow; (8) a life of melancholy, ray of hope unrecognized; (19) a double picture, something deep and solemn and ominous, the talking and singing of women.

In the eight papers remaining are recorded impressions of less emotional intensity, and of somewhat different imagery. (5), (9), (10), (13), (14), receive impressions of storms. (19) Also contained a storm element. In (5) the light-shade sequence is reversed, clear sky, clouds, passing of storm. (13) records a peaceful issue of storm. (14) gives passing of storm, but threats of rain remain; (12) gives a march of monks, a mother's pleading with her son not to join them, and failure of the pleading. In (1) alternate elements are recognized, weariness, singing of hymns, scolding. (3) alone recognizes no disquieting element in the music. The impression is of sweetness and peace.

It will be seen that twenty find some element of emotional unrest or sorrow in the music; for thirteen of the twenty the sorrow is intense. Eleven or twelve find a shading from dark to light in the impressions. For one alone is it all bright. *Conclusion*.—The music expresses some disquieting emotion of considerable intensity. There is found in it shading quite easily recognizable. No uniformity in the imagery.

B. *S. F. Powell, Nocturne, Hope.* Twenty answers were received. Of these (6) and (17) record no impression. Four only explicitly recognize the element of hope; (5) singing maid with hope; (9) youth, hope, Spring, happiness; (11) a hopeful feeling; (12) known, a happy, hopeful song. To these may be added (7) quiet enjoyment; (8) suppressed joy; (13) brook, gay little song, promise of calmness and happiness; (14) happy heart full of sunshine; (16) a happy, shallow nature, laughter; (20) imagery expressive of peaceful, hopeful happiness.

Two find the music expressive of childhood, (1) exuberant spirit of children at play; (4) retrospection, younger experience. For two the content is vague, (3) impression pleasurable; (15) restful sensation. Four impressions are wholly individual, (2) wind rustling through the leaves; (10) meditation, pleading; (18) organ voluntary; (19) doubt, uncertainty, indecision. Three find a shadow with joy, (5) shadow of possible ill, with certainty of present happiness; (11) happy life, but vein of sadness; (14) happy heart, but a doubt enters it. *Conclusion.*—At most the music expressed some emotion of vague happiness, with a vein of uncertainty in the conception.

C. *S. F. Powell, Nocturne, Solitude.* Nineteen answers were received, but (2), (6), (14), (17), (18) record no impression, and (7) finds no emotional interest. For (13) the impression is indefinite; (9) memory of piano practice; (10) thought of tone-harmony. Only ten papers remain, and of these two only give definitely the supposed emotion; (12) song with note of anxiety; (20) known, mother's anxiety for her child. The uneasy note is touched by (3) impression of unrest and great longing, and by (16) confused uncomfortable feeling, storm on water, patches of blue sky through the clouds. To these we may add (19) reverie of mingled regret and resignation; (11) old man looking back on life with feeling of pride and sorrow; (1) political or theological discussion. Of the two remaining (15) is indefinite, running water over stones; (5) contains imagery expressive of sentiment of gaiety—a tea-party. *Conclusion.*—The emotional content neither strong nor definite.

D. *Händel's Aria: "He was despised and rejected of men."* Twenty-one answers are received, but (6) receives no impression. The bars given have been supposed to convey deep sorrow, even dejection; the musician attempted to give drooping effect of physical languor alternating with spiritual devotion. The attempt was wholly unsuccessful. Those to whom the selection was familiar found somewhat of the supposed emotional burden: (7) known, devotional; sorrow, unrest, trouble merged into peace; (19) known, gust, overwhelming, sorrow; (21) known, inspires religious feeling, bright, encouraging strain through the piece. How much the music contributed to the effect, and how much the words, is indeterminable. (20) had seen the analysis, and should not be included. Sixteen impressions remain to be considered. Of these thirteen find the music devotional, with emphasis upon different aspects of devotion. It is merely devotional to (1), (2), (3), (12), (15), (16), (18). Further elements are to be found in (4) invocation, importing praise, perhaps repentance; (5) hymn, expressing confidence in state of future blessedness; (8) contrite heart bowed in prayer; (9) reverential, inviting contrition; (10) prayer; (14) sinful soul, repentant, begging for mercy, then joy, salvation near. Akin to the emotion supposed to be in the selection is (17), life no good, hope, despair. For (13) comes thought of childhood, mother's love and tenderness, first part giving the impression. *Conclusion.*—The music is not inherently sad, but arouses a feeling of religious devotion, which takes individual form.

E. *Nocturne of Chopin*. Twenty-one answers. No impression for (6), while (15) finds associational impression. In the nineteen answers remaining the impressions are divided between those of activity more or less joyous, and those of peace and serenity, sad or joyous. Grouping, we place under the head of joyous activity: (1) rather exhilarating and inspiring, inclination to dance; (2) merry party attending a dance; (4) impression of life and action, perhaps passion; (9) patriotic sentiment, haste, energy, enthusiasm, unity; and (10) irrepressible child. Under quiet happiness group (7) quiet enjoyment, (11) quiet beauty, someone gazing on stars among mountains; (17) "I call earth not gray, but rosy." Mingling of sadness with the joy; (5) sickness, despair, hope; (12) attempt to be bright and cheerful, strain of sadness; (13) party of friends bidding farewell to one of their number, gay appearance, consciousness of sadness; (14) circus, child rope-walker, breathless suspense; (19) woman in garden, quiet beauty, but a thought troubles; (3) miserable affair of life, but hopeful shades; (20) love-song, sequence of emotions, tenderness, passion, solicitude, rivalry; (21) religious sentiment, repose, giving up of hope, resignation. There is indefiniteness: in (8) conglomerate, in (16) water in some form, and in (18) wind blowing through trees, probably expressive of not unpleasant activity. Sixteen find some element of happiness or hope. Five find distinct expression of activity. Three report that an impression of serenity is given. Eight find a note of sadness. *Conclusion*.—Probably the music expressed some sort of happiness or joy or hope with a subdued strain of sadness. Joy dominant, sadness subordinate.

F. *Schubert-Liszt, Serenade*. Twenty-two answers. No impression from (2), (15), (16). The selection is recognized by (19) and has distinct associations. (4) finds it merely an impulse to make a noise, and (16) simply enjoyed it. Under impressions of joyful emotion or imagery we group (3) pleasant or joyous feeling; (7) fun or frolic; (8) dancing and joy; (9) sentiment of gaiety; (10) pleasure and happiness; (11) ideal Spring morning, birds chirpy; (12) birds twittering in trees; (13) impression of opera house, light, music, and courtesy; (14) everyone happy, tally-ho starting; (17) dancing, good company; (18) happiness, gay party of young people enjoying a frolic; (21) singing of birds, bright and happy; (22) twittering of birds. The last three are less easily grouped, (20) moonlight in Spain, emotion light and passing; (1) many ladies talking at once; (5) trout fishing with varied success. Thirteen express in varied imagery an emotion of cloudless joy. Four of the thirteen express this under the imagery of bird-twittering, which is probably the original burden. Three find a rather indifferent emotion, pleasant, however, rather than unpleasant. *Conclusion*.—The selection expresses some sort of happy gaiety.

As conclusion to be drawn from the experiment as a whole, it seems possible to hold provisionally that music has a somewhat definite emotional content, and that impression of this is received by the average listener, but with varying intensity. The formal content seems to be furnished entirely by the mood, associations or temperament of the individual. A great difference exists both in the capacity of individuals to receive definite impressions and of composers to convey them. To overcome a strong individual mood, requires music of extremely strong expressiveness. In average passive susceptibility the same general emotion is aroused with varying individual emphasis on different sides of the emotion. The dominant tone is usually caught and held to the exclusion of the subordinate emotions.